

Local Health Jurisdiction School Environmental Health Program Survey January 2004

35 out of 35 Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) Responded

1. 25 identify themselves as having a School Program.
2. 35 conduct inspections of school food service facilities. Most do these on the same basis as their regular food service establishment permits and charge comparable fees.
 - 4 do not charge schools: Columbia, Garfield, Klickitat, Pacific
 - frequency is 1-2/year, 2 LHJs try for 3/year
3. 35 do plan review for new construction and remodels, as required by WAC 246-366.
 - Only 6 do more than 4 plan reviews/year on average, most see very few and have concerns with maintaining expertise.
 - Fees vary from \$30 - \$142/hour, or may be a set minimum, 6 have no charge.
4. 10 have routine school inspection programs. They are as follows:
 - Island: 1/yr, \$98-\$390/ (fees are new this year)
 - Kittitas: 1/yr, \$50/hr
 - Lincoln: 1/3-5 yrs, \$40/hr (just starting up again after 3-4 years)
 - Mason: 1/4 yrs, \$50/hr
 - NETri: 1/3 yrs, \$60/hr
 - Pacific: ~2x/yr, No Charge
 - (PHSKC will do on request at \$142/hr)
 - Snohomish: 1/2 yrs, \$62-\$143 (ramping up the program this year)
 - Spokane: 1/1-3 yrs, \$60/hr (self inspection option for schools)
 - Thurston: 1/yr, \$130-\$620/
 - Wahkiakum: 1/yr, No Charge
5. If the LHJ does routine school inspections, playgrounds are generally included.
6. 13 have had some form of Rehab the Lab (RTL) in their schools where science labs are inspected and high hazard chemicals are disposed of, usually through Local Hazardous Waste Programs. Those LHJs who do routine inspections usually include science labs and vocational shops. DOH and the RTL Workgroup are compiling the Washington State numbers on RTL. King County & ESD 101 have done the most extensive work. Ecology granted \$500,000 last year for high schools outside of King County, where ~99% of middle and high schools have been done.
7. 11 have used Tools for Schools (TfS) or similar IAQ work. All who do routine inspections include some IAQ. All respond to IAQ complaints to the best of their ability, often using DOH or the WSU Energy Extension/EPA funded program. 3 (Kitsap, PHSKC, & TPCHD) have done TfS without having routine inspections.
8. 35 respond to complaints. The main areas are IAQ, food service, sanitation/restrooms, water quality, playgrounds, pigeons, bats, and vectors.

9. 3, Spokane, Tacoma-Pierce and PHSKC, have School Advisory Boards for the Health District with representatives from public and private schools.

10. 2, Tacoma-Pierce and Thurston, publish an Environmental Health Newsletter for schools.

11. Barriers to having an optimal school program include:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of training
- Lack of personnel
- Resistance from local health boards and/or school districts
- Lack of a clear, concise code

“Our biggest challenge is developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with schools and districts that are facing diminishing resources. While they desire to comply with our requirements and recommendations they are frustrated as they do not have the resources (budget, time and personnel) to do so.”

Julie Awbrey, Food/Living Environment Program Manager, Spokane Regional Health District

12. What services do you want from DOH?

- Inexpensive Training/Certification
- Technical support
- Educational material
- Establishment of inspection and compliance criteria/guidelines
- Funding for equipment, training, program
- Convince Local Boards of Health and School Administrators that school inspections are good and necessary to protect the health of children.
- Plan review support/services
- Newsletter
- Liaison with OSPI/School Districts
- A decent WAC

“Develop comprehensive regulations, and guidelines. On-going training opportunities for plan review, inspection, indoor air quality, playgrounds. Have staff available as a technical resource. First priority we would like to see is a complete revision of the WAC that either gives clear direction for schools and regulators to follow, and clear definition of our authority. If the decision by policy makers is to continue to limp along with the existing program it is unlikely our participation in working with local schools would increase.”

Paul Chudek, Environmental Health Supervisor, Whatcom Co. HD

“To continue to show a coordinated effort between WSDOH and OSPI, that a local health jurisdiction is a resource for health and safety information for school districts. That information needs to come from the top-down while we are working from the bottom-up to show ourselves as a resource. Grant money available for those LHJ's that need to get a program jump-started. The Rehab the Lab program was an excellent example.”

Corinne Story, Environmental Health Supervisor, Skagit County Public Health Dept.

“I would like to see the promotion of a more statewide or regional approach in order to develop the critical mass necessary to sustain a program.”

Larry Fay, Environmental Health Director, Jefferson County Health and Human Services

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